NAQCC News

Jan 12, 2008	NAQCC Web Site	Issue #062

In this issue:

1. January Sprint.
2. December Challenge Results
3. General Club News
4. CW Cartoon of the Month
5. Member News

1. SPRINT: Our sprint is this Wednesday evening, Jan. 16th at 8:30-10:30 PM EST (Thursday 0130-0330Z).

This time we encourage you to try to get your best all time score in one of our NAQCC sprints. The one who does get their best score and also has the highest score among all participants who do achieve that goal gets our Special Award certificate this month. I have a record here of everyone's score from all our sprints since the first one back in October 2004, so I can tell at a glance if you've beat your previous high score or not. So all you have to do to be eligible for the Special Award is to tell us you are interested either by putting Yes in the Special Award box in the autologger or mentioning you are interested if you submit your log any other way. You must tell us to be considered.

Let's hope there are no 'black holes' this month and everyone has a fair chance at winning without having their efforts go in vain because they were in the infamous 'black hole'. I know it is frustrating to put in so much effort and still do poorly because of circumstances beyond your control. We hope those in the 'black hole' last month weren't discouraged too badly and will show up this month and try again.

There are the usual prizes and certificates topped off by our monthly giveaway of the CW books on CD donated by Chuck K7QO. Chuck is currently considering a change in the giveaway. We'll post full details when they become available. The CD's are given free to the member (officers not included) making the highest score in the sprint who hasn't won the CD's previously.

When the sprint is over, please submit your results and log via our autologger. So far it works perfectly for about 95% of those who use it. Any problems seem to be caused by a setup that sends an incorrect ID to the Windstream server due to the use of a proxy server or overly protective firewall. If you are one of the ones in the tiny minority for whom it doesn't work, please submit your log anyway via an alternate method as described in the rules. In December 44 logs came in perfectly via the autologger. Only one person reported trouble using it.

Remember if you use paper logging during the sprints, there's our downloadable log and summary form with instructions for you to fill in with your text editor to email to us or you can transfer the info to our autologger.

If you use GenLog for the sprint, be sure to get the latest GenLog data file here. IMPORTANT: After the sprint, use the 'Log' menu - 'Write ASCII log [K3WWP.log]' selection to create your log, and submit the K3WWP.log file via the autologger, email, etc. Of course obviously your log will have your call in the menu choice and log file name, not K3WWP.

If you're entering one of our sprints for the first time, we welcome you and hope you will be a regular participant from now on. Last month we welcomed AF3Z,W4QO,WA2WUH,KA2L,WA8QFE,NK1N,W0GSQ,W6SQQ,WD8KRV,KS4DU as first time participants and/or log submitters.

Oh, and don't forget - I almost forgot to mention it - we have a second sprint this month for fans of 160 meters. Our 160M only sprint takes place just before the CQWW 160M contest. So it's an excellent chance to get in a bit of practice, antenna testing, etc. beforehand. Our 160M sprint is Thursday evening, January 24th from 8:30-10:30 EST or January 25th 0130-0330Z. Our first 160M sprint last January proved very popular, and should be even more so this year. Remember 160M conditions have been just great this winter and QRP signals are bouncing everywhere. See you there.

Full Sprint info here.

2. DECEMBER CHALLENGE RESULTS: Our third very successful challenge in a row, and the fact they were three distinctly different types is all the more encouraging. We had 14 members report their results.

The winner of the bug/paddle handles drawing was Chris KU4A. The whole process took under an hour this time from sending the list to Gregg, to the drawing, to Chris choosing which set he wanted, to getting them in the mail to him. We like to do things lickety-split like that here at the NAQCC and appreciate it when you respond rapidly to any communications regarding the club. You can see examples of the handles on Gregg's web site.

Our certificate winners in December were K3WWP who made the most overall qualifying QSO's with 26 (25 with a straight key) and N9AKF who made the second most straight key qualifying QSO's with 22. Congratulations and thanks to all who participated and reported their results.

Full challenge info including my tutorial/work sheet for our alphabet style challenges here.

3. GENERAL CLUB NEWS: - Here is what our members are saying about the newsletter: "Dear John; I have received NAQCC Newsletter #61 for the first time. It is great indded and I have never seen/red anything like this among others radioamateurs issues. There is a lot of the most interesting / usefull information. It is a pity but I can not take an active part in such interesting and socially valuable activities of The Club cos of too poore condx. So thank you all very much. Merry Christmass and Happy New 2008 Year! == Valery UA3AO / #2135"

"Hi John, K3WWP, Many thanks for a great newsletter. A lot of effort into it! And a Happy New Year to you and yours! 73, Carl Zelich, AA4MI"

- - Because of Lery's email and also comments from other EU members, we are thinking of trying

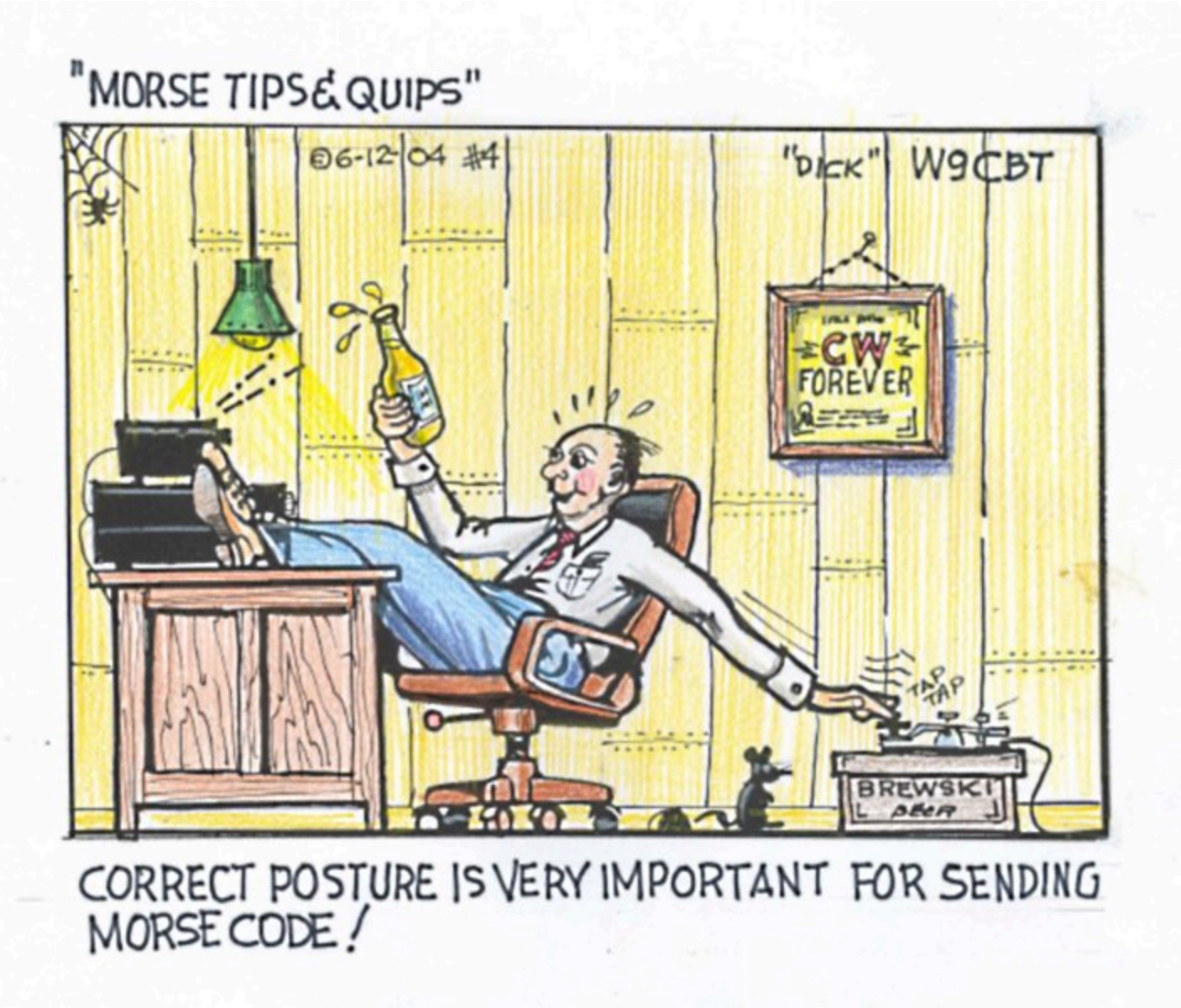
a sprint tailored to Europe. It would be pretty much a copy of our current sprints but with the exception that it would take place roughly at 8:30-10:30PM Central European time. If that is to happen we would need one of our European members to step forward and handle all the details using our current sprint rules and procedures. I already have some sources in EU willing to help publicize such a EU sprint should it come into being.

- Thanks to the generosity of Nancy WZ8C head of FISTS and because of the wonderful cooperation between FISTS and the NAQCC, once again this year a FREE one-year FISTS membership or renewal goes to the overall highest scorer in our Participation Award. This is a very kind gesture on their part, and we urge you to say thanks by joining FISTS if you are not already a member, and to participate in as many of their activities as you can in addition to participating in our NAQCC activities of course.

Speaking of the Participation Award, our 2007 totals are now complete with the passing of the submission deadline for the December challenge results. Briefly here are the winners. The free FISTS 1-year renewal went to Don VE3HUR who also of course was the winner of the VE/DX division with a perfect 36 points. The Eastern division winner was John K3WWP with a perfect 36 points. John, being a club officer, was not eligible for the FISTS prize. The Western division went right down to the wire. Steve NU7T submitted a December challenge report to move him into a tie with Bruce WY7N, so both will share the Western division title with 11 points and get a certificate.

- I am disappointed when I get an email from a club member who has either a simple or fancy email signature that doesn't include their NAQCC membership number or even a mention of the NAQCC. I hope it is just due to an oversight on their part. I hope they are not ashamed of being a NAQCC member for any reason. It only adds a minimum of 10 characters to add NAQCC #### to your email signature, and it is so important in helping to publicize our wonderful club.

4. CW CARTOON OF THE MONTH: Let's take a comedy break now courtesy of Dick Sylvan W9CBT. Dick has been a long-time QRP/CW operator. One of his many talents is being a cartoon artist, and he is supplying a cartoon each month for the newsletter. The NAQCC is very honored to become the third organization to feature Dick's cartoons in their publications. Dick's cartoons appear monthly in The K9YA Telegraph, an on-line only Ham Radio E-zine and also in RadCom Magazine, the British Ham Radio publication. Dick has also authored a book entitled "Hi Hi - A Collection of Ham Radio Cartoons" available via his web site at http://www.k9ya.org/w9cbt/. A new cartoon will be appearing in each of our even-numbered newsletters.



5. MEMBER NEWS: Thanks to your news submissions, this is becoming a very popular section of the newsletter. We hope you will continue telling us of your QRP/CW doings and including the wonderful pictures as well. Remember we only accept POSITIVE news here unlike the TV newscasts. There is so much that is wonderful going on in the world, it's a shame only the negative is emphasized in so many places.

Send your news items to our news editor Paul KD2MX at **KD2MX@ARRL.NET**.

- **From Nate KC2MJT #1476** - Read with interest the Black Hole analysis. It may have a connection with the conductivity of the soils in these areas. Here is a link to the FCC map of US soil conductivity http://www.fcc.gov/mb/audio/m3/. At first glance there appears to be a correlation between the two maps. Hope this is of interest.

- **From John K3WWP #0002** - Last issue we showed you Lery UA3AO's key collection. Now here's a key collection of a different sort. Take a look at the collection of our member Jari OH6DC here. How about that? Incidentally what are 'SSB' and 'mike' F6HIQ mentions in the next item? Must be some French words, I guess. HI

- **From Hervé, F6HIQ, #1939** - There is a "new old" QRP rig in my station: a Ten-Tec Argonaut

505, used with a straight key. I've been told that its CW sounds nicely. I have also made some SSB tests with a 50k ohm dynamic mike and it seems to work correctly, but does any one know what is the best audio input impedance to use with that rig, the manual just says "high impedance", and I've not found the original Ten-Tec mike?

About the aerials: for the moment, a new vertical has taken the place of the three band GP on the balcony. It's a 25-foot high aluminium antenna, with a 9/1 toroidal impedance transformer at the base, and no radials. I tune it on all bands (80 to 10 m) with a MFJ Versa Tuner II. It is not a great aerial but I can now go on 30, 40 and 80m (last night, I had a qso on 40 m with a CO8 station).

I wish you all an exciting New Year 2008, full of QRP contacts. Best 73's from France.

- **From Paul, KD2MX, #1091** - The somewhat infamous "RF Black Hole" made another appearance the night of Friday, December 28. I was working the RAC contest QRP that evening (Saturday morning UTC). From 0044 to 0223 I worked only 13 stations, most with some or more difficulty, two on 40m, eleven on 80m. Many stations could not hear me even though they had decent, although somewhat muted, signals at my QTH. One example, K4BAI was a solid S9 but John never heard me. Of course, I've worked him countless times QRP. The stations I could work were scattered, a few 4s, VEs, an 8, and a 9.

Finally at 0230 I went to 160M. What a difference! There were strong signals. I worked 10 stations in about 20 minutes, most with ease and then took some time off. When I came back just after 0400, 80M/40M seemed normal. Signals were much stronger and I worked 18 stations in about 30 minutes including lots of VEs and a scattering of 4s, 3s, etc.

I could really hear a difference in the band, even better, my signal was now being heard. The conditions seemed very much like what we've experienced here in parts of the Northeast during some of our sprints. What made this event especially interesting was that 160M seemed immune to the black hole effect and there was a very substantial change in conditions on 80M/40M over a short period later in the evening.

Later during the contest, I thought I was finally going to get QRP WAS. KL8DX was running stations and was a solid S7-S9 here for nearly two hours. He worked everybody but me. Finally with no more callers he picked out KD2 but that was it! After a few tries he sent "sri no copy" and went qrt. I've easily worked Hawaii countless times QRP but I guess I'll have to wait for some sunspots to get #50.

I also worked the Stew Perry event QRP. Conditions didn't seem quite as good as during ARRL 160, there was definitely more noise here. I hadn't checked my loop in a week or so and when I walked around the house the next morning, I saw some of my antenna laying on the roof. I'm sure that didn't help much but I still managed to tally more Qs (111) than last year and even made some 16 pointers. This remains one of my favorite events.

The publication of our next newsletter will be announced via email to all members for whom we have a valid email address unless they specifically have unsubscribed from the email.

Unless otherwise credited, all items are written by K3WWP.

If you came directly to this newsletter, we invite you now to browse the NAQCC Web Site.